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ZOROASTRIANISM
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S. H. JHABVALA

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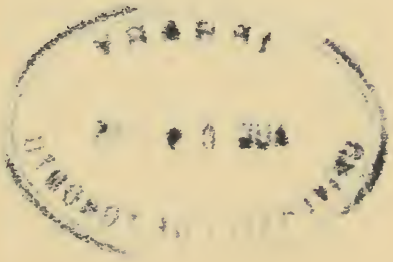

S. H. JHABVALA

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PREFACE

In presenting this Booklet to the readers I have an object viz., of showing how, dominated by historical conditions, Parsis—followers of Zoroastrianism — sustained themselves against all political exigencies of life and steered themselves clear of dangers to their national existence. I also want to show that the main oar that guided the barque of their career was their national virtues inspired by their faith which leapt forward once again to life and activity.

Placed as Parsis are to-day amidst diverse races and religions of mankind, the barque of Zoroastrians practically anywhere in the world cannot sink if they maintain the same arduous genesis of their inherent way of life. The Parsis sank after the Achœmenides, but survived somehow during the Parthian rule; and then revived during the days of the Sassanians. The same evolution is mercilessly repeating itself here in India and elsewhere. I feel sure we shall survive and perhaps once again rise to ancient glory.

Often the merciless question is asked to the soul of this race long enduring suffering, whether it can survive the tempests of adverse time. Who will prophesy? But History abundantly proves that a race once organised under the aeges of its original faith never perished. Changes have endured the fulness of life; and they have given unending sustenance to the Parsi back-bone which though at times bent, has never yielded to ruin and consequent end. The Parsis are a valued part of the great human race, and with their assertive virtues just as to-day they are contributing towards the strengthening of universal life and faith, for all time to come, they will prove a source of inspiration for all that is best and greatest in mankind.

AUTHOR

Khar, Bombay,

1st June 1952.

The sacred truths world's Master-Soul propounded to humanity a thousand years before the founder of the creed whose followers to-day number over a fourth of the civilised globe, (Christianity), were immortal in their virtue. If they are alive upto to-day surviving perilous revolutions of a stupendous time, how could they not survive the tortuous tempests of post-Achaemenian days—days when the whole Iranian plateau was shaking from bottom upwards in a ferment of political upheavals, territorial aggrandisements and racial ascendancies? How should a Zoroastrian live?— and the Minoi Khirad has a guiding answer — "He should make wisdom his protector, should don the weapons and armour of contentment over the body, should have Truth for his shield, and thankfulness for his mace, should make devotion his bow, and liberality his arrow, should make moderation his spear, perseverance his gauntlet, and fortune his shelter. Religion= taking care of the soul, (religion comes not from "religare"= to bind together; but from "relegere"=to take care of: opposite of "neglegere"=to neglect, is to be life itself lived. The follower of Zarathushtra lived Zoroastrianism as put in a nut-shell by the above quotation from the Minoi Khirad in pre-Sassanian times, though the revolutionary times displaced it by the varying conquests of Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, culminating in the none-too-pseudo-Zoroastrians-the Parthians.

If the un-changing revelation of a changeful history of human civilisation divulges but one mystery of the human mind, it is that the essence underlying every concept of religion endures either as a feeling of absolute dependence, as Schleirmacher would put it, or as intuition of Union with the world, as Havelock Ellis would say, or as Murray announces, as that which brings us into relation with the great world-forces, or as Reinach says, sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties, though the forms, the vestments change, change eternally subject to change.

This happened to Zarathushtra's exposition of his creed—"lived and experienced metaphysics, un-thinkable as a certainty, supernatural as a fact, life as existence in a world that is non-actual but true", to quote Oswald Spengler. The light did not dim; the shadow shifted according to the curve of the horizon: the deer carried the perfume in its abdomen; only it smelt in the woods abroad and the deer wandered in search of what it actually had.

THE MAGI

125 years before the fall of the Achœmenians, Herodotus speaks inspiringly about the Magi as the most scientific exponents of the philosophy of the Deity, and Zarathushtra was the foremost of them all. His theism could not fall with the fall of Darius Codomanus, but the monotheism of his preaching wore a many-coloured garb during five centuries and a half of non-Zoroastrian regime largely covered by the Parthian empire which ultimately fell at the conquering feet of Artakhshir-e- Papakan.

The many-curved graph of theism had passed its inveterate line through Animism, Magic, Taboo and Totem, Ancestor-worship, and even Paganism, before the deep centre contemplated by Zarathushtra on the Mount of Ushidarena, resulting in monotheism could be located to draw mankind towards it, from which since then it has not swerved, though later both the Aryans and the Semitic races gave to humanity newer forms of faith and religion. Zarathushtra taught what the Dinkard summarily puts—that "The human body is a tenement with senses as its windows, and soul as its owner." In the architecture of his monotheistic concept Zarathushtra placed Ahura Mazda at the top of the hierarchy, a Spirit, and yet the Lord of Wisdom, with Vohu Mano = the Best Mind, Asha = Purity, Sraosha = religious obedience, Atar = fire, Ashi = sanctity, Armaiti = devotion, Haurvatat and Ameretat = fulfilment in this world and the next, as instruments of His power to create and fulfil Good on one hand and destroy Evil

on the other. He proclaimed through 17 Gathas divided into 5 groups, that, "The ox turns to dust, silver and gold turn dust, the valiant hero turns to dust, all mortals turn to dust. That one thing which does not turn to dust is the Righteousness which a man practises upon the earth". He imparted to mankind the knowledge of Time being the veritable Ahura Himself,—Delay and Afterwards being the two demons that Ormazd denounces, as being members in the camp of Ahriman.

In his theology, as Minoi Khirad would translate, "The sky and the earth and the water and all else that there is, are like unto an egg of a bird. The sky is arranged by the skill of Ormazd like an egg over the earth. And the earth is stationed in the midst of the sky like the yolk in an egg." Though fear was the cradle in which the gods were born, yet Zarathustra relegated Fear to the domain of Ahriman; and Ormazd was to him but an emblem of Love and Joy. What Dinkard says about Religion may be said about Ormazd in the vocabulary of Zarathushtra—"If you advance but one step towards religion, religion will advance 10 steps towards you."

As for social organisation, Zarathushtra corresponds to the exposition of philosophy of Manu-Minos the Great of the Greeks, for in the Dinkard four classes divide the human race into vocational groups—Heads, Hands, Belly, and Legs —Athravans and Ratheshtars from the higher guard of mankind in their growth, yet the agriculturists of the Belly are noteworthily dear to the Prophet,—vide the Gathas—"Happy is the land on which an agriculturist walks; happy the wind that blows over him; happy the horse which he rides; happy the cattle on whose products he subsists; and happy indeed, are the sun and the moon and the stars that shine upon him."

THRESHOLD OF SASSAN

That in very brief analysis, was the social polity, and the theology that Zarathushtra left behind him, and the

all-comprehensive eminence of his intelligence continued down till the threshold of the Sassanide citadel. The Bactrians, the Medes, and the Persians had distributed themselves in the North-east, North-west, and South-west, respectively, and the above theological code, while making Zoroastrianism the pristine character of the different races, marred its essential purity with affectations from them, e.g., the first monotheistic dualism of the Gathas was followed by the pure dualism of the later Avesta—a Sassanide growth out of the original pastoral Pehelavi. Mithraism was one another silvern shadow over the golden soul of Zoroastrianism. The fate of every evolution of Reason has been entrusted by history to remnants of change—change brought about by inter-relations of groups of mankind as in the above case. Arbella wrested the Zoroastrian sceptre from the hands of Darius III (330 B.C.) Arsaces founded the Parthian empire, (250 B. C.). The Seleucid satrapies failed after Alexander's death; and the rapid stages of political confusion ushered in a Zoroastrian chaos in the forms of belief. The wandering nomads during the Seleucid regime—what higher Zoroastrian wealth of thought they could pursue!—the abundance of the Achœmenian granary—. Parthia at the summit and her intercourse with rival aggressive powers, (120-88 B. C.) could only produce a Parthian religion—ancestor-worship, magic, invocations to the varied gods for earthly gifts, such as grain, freedom from disease and aversion from nature's calamities. Zoroastrianism during the 550 years of its abolition of rule had not become a vacuum, dark though the surface, and chaotic the corners wherever the Asha spirit turned its bewildering eye; but surely, that was not the province Zarathushtra had left when he fell at the hand of Tur-bara-tursh at Nush-Adar in Balkh. Since the days of Gaye Maretan, the primal man, faith has had a human curve of varying growth—though everything is on the decadent, yet in the scheme of Ahura nothing perishes—everything seeks its shoots in a variety of shapes and diversity of forms. The spiritual doctrine of pre-Sassanian days covered in its shell the notion of the Fravashis, hardly to be conceived in the Gathas of Zara-

thushtra. Says the Yasna, "We adore the sunny abodes of Asha, wherein the souls (Urwan) of the dead rest, which are the Fravashis of the righteous." And in still another verse, the same sacred scripture emphasises Daena (self) the living embodiment of the spirit, saying, "Whoso makes his thought now better, now worse, and likewise his self (Daena) by action and by word, and follows his own inclinations, wishes and choices, he shall in thy purpose be in a separate place at the last."

The lower, corrupt forms of Zoroastrianism dished out to the Persian race a Hinduistic pantheon narrated in the 11th chapter of the Geeta where Krishna the God emboldens himself with absorption of the whole variegated universe in himself, for the phil-hellenism of the then all-ruling Magis exhibited Zoroastrianism in multi-numerous images, such as Mithrae, Airyaman, Haoma, Verethraghana, Perendi, Nairyosanga, Vayu, Usha, Anahit (female divinity), Yezata (Vedic Yajata) = one fit to be adored. The thought of man grows from stage to stage, assisted by nature's un-alterable laws; and just as from Primary or Palaeozoic age civilisation developed to Post-Tertiary or Pleistocene age and yet God's essence remained in tact, the slow evolution of Zoroastrianism bulged out into a Partho-Roman cult influenced by Hellenic deism, and still none-the-less Ahura, Good and Evil, and Devotion and Asha that Zarathushtra had expounded in the days of Gushtasp remained the central kernel of the philosophy of life of all those who breathed in the territory of Iran that was in those days.

Parthia, the unclaimed theology of Zarathushtra, fell before the vast-weilding arms of Rome—that Volagases the last of the Parthian chaos—and when Artabanus fell in 226 A.D. the soul of Parthia suspired, and with it, all that was inglorious in the Dharma of the region, allowing ingress to the hidden rhythm of Zarathushtra of the Achœmenian epoch.

MITHRAISM

It was Mithraism that had engrossed the captive mind of man of the western division of Asia of the pre-Artekhshatra days; and it had spread all over Europe with the idolistic passions of the Hellenic priests so well depicted by Bulwar Lytton in one of his famous novels (Last Days of Pompeii), Mithra, however, still a visible link between the Un-manifested and the pining soul of man. In the Geeta (11th Adhyaya) Krishna determines devotion to the Highest as the "Nirvana" of the devotees, though he does not condemn that to the Manifest Daeva; and so, the Mithraic cult still preserved Ahura as the central governor and controller of the whole creation, though He was unobtainable even by the most impassioned of devotees.

The Battle of Hormuz (226) A.D. installed Ardashir-e-Papakan the founder of the Sassanian empire on the Persian throne whose wings had now spread over territories vaster than where the last Darius of the Achœmenians had left. Ardashir set afoot immediately in the midst of his rambling preoccupations, a true and sound system of Zoroastrian faith erstwhile weakened on all sides by corrupt influences. With the help of the privileged centres, such as the Aristocracy and the Priestly community he opened a campaign of diffusing and diluting habits based on Zoroastrian theism, and as Santayana remarks, "Civilisation has hitherto consisted in the diffusion and dilution of habits arising in privileged classes," Ardashir gave an impetus to the birth of a new thinking both religiously and socially,—a new civilisation as if out of the old shattered crags of a broken time. With new culture through facilities for the growth and transmission of knowledge, manners and arts the first of the Sassanians collected together a number of "Teachers of Good Religion". The Magi figured prominently in this convocation, for they were in the leading strings of the whole religious movement, good, bad and indifferent. Ardashir wanted to excavate the Good underlying Magi-ism, avoiding the ugly protube-

rances that had eaten into the very vitals of the noblest, healthy spirit of the Master. They knew Democracy in those days better than what we are following out in these days of Black-Market and Hunt-For-Power; and so Ardashir called a Council of the Nation out of which to elect a College of chosen Magi. The first Assembly of the Magi was thus so scientifically convoked that a full confidence was inspired in the action of Ardashir towards revival of the deadened sanities of Zarathushtra's original creed. "By his holy spirit and by Best Thought, Deed, and Word, in accordance with Right, Mazda Ahura with Dominion and Piety, shall give us Welfare and Immortality."—Yasna. And Best Thought the prime genesis of mankind began first to be ventilated after 1500 years of separation of Iranians from their great Prophet. The results of the convocation were remarkably fertile in as much as a redivivus of Zoroastrianism through the State became a settled fact. Mithra the protector of the Roman Empire had seriously damaged the linguistic scheme of things as prevailing then, and Avasta was disastrously crippled. Ardashir gave an impetus to the revival of the language, and lurid lights of the birth-pangs of Pahalavi-Parthava, began to be first visible in the corners of the Convocation of the Magis. No preliminary conferences of the type under mention here, have evolved final plans of belief and so, Ardashir's first Assembly could hardly achieve a finality in the direction of his ambitions; but the most salient feature was the unalterable direction given to the people that henceforward Zoroastrianism was to be restored to its original pristine purity.

ARDAVIRAF

Ardaviraf, the first product of the new revival—the saintliest of saints of those renovated times, became God-dedicated, and he fell in a divine trance for full one week when he dreamt the dream of the immortals. He bore the spiritual burdens of Yagna for the revival of Zoroaster in the land now redeemed from the hands of deteriorated time. His rational soul wandered around the whole world, and through the

encompassing void, it gazed into infinity, and considered the periodic destructions, and re-births of the hidden Universe. On his awaking, the text he dictated to the priestly scribes became the authorized version of neo-Zoroastrianism. Ardaviraf lit the fire long since dead, and Ardashir began religious persecution of the Christians—the sword of Righteousness offering peace to whomsoever sought through a pure monotheism revealed by Ardaviraf.

Ardashir's dictum—"Consider the altar and the throne as inseparable; they must always sustain one another. A sovereign without religion is a tyrant.", greatly influenced the policies of relationship between the State and the Church, in the days of his valiant successor and son, Shahpoor the First.

Rome was the seat then of a multi-phased Christianity—a catholicism ridden rough-shod by all infusion of a Hellenic star-worship. In order to wrench away the people on the west from their crude forms of belief to the only Righteous Path of Zarathushtra, wars must be fought with the Romans; and though Shahpoor did not declare Jehhad upon Rome yet without territorial aggrandisement, the Romans, made vigorous by arduous physical conditions of life, yet brutalised by the power of a low form of religious belief, could not be weaned over to the divine Asha of the revived creed. History is a process of re-barbarisation; and the Romans driven by increasing exigencies of survival, "had left their native habitat, and had moved down upon the less vigorous people in their neighbourhood, had conquered, displaced, and even absorbed them."

SHAHPOOR I

Why should not Shahpoor then, conquer the illegitimate conquerors but for the establishment of the kingdom of Good Thought? He opened three campaigns against the Romans A.D. 241 to 263—ended with Odenathus of Palmyra, and carried home to the region of the Mithrais the awe-inspiring verdict embodied in the following Pahalavi inscription at Naksha-e-

Rajab:—"This is the image of the Ormaz-worshipper, the God, Shahpoor, king of kings Aryan and non-Aryan, of the race of the Gods, son of the Ormazd-worshipper, the God Ardashir, King of Kings Aryan, of the race of the Gods, the off-spring of the God Papak, the King."

While the Assembly of the Magis, arduously assisted by bands of devoted Mobeds, was successfully cleansing the Augean stables, the sacred Temples of Fire lifted their spires into the lofty flame of the Eternal, and the indestructible spirit of Nush-Adar began to ascend the golden steps of Zoroastrianism. It is not as much the numbers of temples of worship as the sphere of physical conquest of vast lands towards the west that will approve the spread of Zoroastrian light during and immediately after the reign of Shahpoor. Christianity began to totter, though it did not fall; Mithraism began to be disfigured, though it did not cease its power anciently established. In the complex of political revolutions that were being rapidly caused, no harmonious history of a religious revival could naturally be read. But that large masses of subject races were embracing the holy creed of Zarathushtra could be verified from the widening of geographical sphere under Shahpoor. It was the Christ of the "barbarian" that had held in his clutches the inter-regnum of the Aryan society after the snap of the chain at Issus, but when the Sassanians stepped on the threshold the natural thought of man adventured in a labyrinth of analysis, and discovered, behind the prevailing forms of society, the real individual. Divested of its normal function the thought turned inward and discovered the self. The original individual manifested through the dust and ashes of the un-Zoroastrian forces, and the torrent was unchecked.

MANICHEISM

Christianity and Mithraism were open foes to contest against but there was a new peril—Manicheism that raised its dangerous head against the infant effort of Zoroastrianism,—not a creed but a phantasy, not a belief but a cant, more tutored out of the soul of poverty than cultivated as a principle of faith.

Mani (Manes), Al-baruni puts down his birth in 215 A. D., a limping scholar of no mean repute formulated a formula of divine life. Briefly put, Manicheism was an "admixture of the light and the darkness, which give rise to the material universe", was essentially evil and a result of the activity of the powers of evil. The whole universe would collapse and the final conflagration would mark the redemption of the light and its final dissociation from the irredeemable and indestructible darkness. The philosophical interpretation of the esoteric in every religious creed has, history proves, captured the soul of the rude untrained, and the herd among mankind, for it captures the imagination of the masses and the ball is rapidly set rolling. Mani had laid down a broad basis for the interpretation of his ideas; and cherished Zarathushtra, Christ, and Buddha,—he had visited China, Tibet, and India during his peregrinations—as great messengers. Mani became acknowledged as a pioneer of a new faith as far as Tibet and China on the east, to Europe on the west. Samarcand and Babylonia turned out to be the sheltering house for the new messiah, at the last place of which the Manichean Pope held suzerainty for many centuries. Shahpoor, too, was captured by his enamouring interpretations of the theory of Good and Evil, Chastity and Poverty as virtues for self-renunciation. In the general religious revival, when Shahpoor was motivated by higher ideals and purpose, he welcomed Mani in his court. But he resented it later, Zarathushtra being denied Prophethood, and relegated only to a corner of a messenger categorying with Christ and Buddha. He hardly dismissed him from his presence ere he died, leaving the uncertain task of accepting him as a messiah to his more impetuous successor Hormazd, who venerated him and gave him cordial reception at his court. Mani soon gained advantage therefrom and he leapt forward to founding a sect named after him later on.

But while Christianity the toddling babe of time, became irremediably fascinated by Mani and Mani's undaunted preachings so that the whole of Mesopotamia—the glory of the east of those times, accepted him as the Saviour of

humanity after Christ,—Zoroastrianism in its essence remained unaffected though seriously mauled, and prejudicially sunk in turmoil.

Why did the scanty paths of the human mind sweep their dross before Mani, so that he could enter without any special feature of an inroad upon the intellect of the times? Because a long pervading Mithraism had cleansed the mind of the people towards a reception of such doctrinaire principles as Manicheism sought to impart to mankind. The idolatry inherent in Mithraism secured the passage of Manicheism into the intellectual realms of man. The super-potent Mithras (vide the Bull-slaying Mithra in the Vatican at Rome), imparted to the worshippers not only bodily strength, but also gave spiritual wisdom; and Mithraism with its mystic ceremonies assured to the devotees a higher life beyond the grave, which excited unconquerable hope in man. Born of Iranian cult and having dealings with Christianity born of Judaism, Manicheism swept the people off their feet. Christ's vows of poverty, and help to the weak and fallen, are indeed monastic charms, which have fascinated humanity. Edward Carpenter exclaims, "If I am not level with the lowest I am nothing; and if I did not know for a certainty that the craziest sot in the village is my equal, and were not proud to have him walk with me as my friend, I would not write another word". Even the Dinkard supports the sanity of Christian virtues, such as Poverty. Dastoor Tansar who flourished later was attracted by the eclecticism of Manicheism, born as he was and soaked in the philosophy of the greatest of the Greek philosophers, Plato. Just as Mani carried away disciples among Persian Iranians, he had deeper percolation of his spirit in the saints of Persian Christians, St. Augustine having his whole life and being soaked in Manicheism. In the collections of spiritual texts of Iran made by Ardashir and Shahpoor, afterwards stored and preserved in the Jund-e-Shahpoor, an academy built by Shah Naoshirwan, Manicheism also found a reverent place. Excitement of human hope in after-life has been the civilising energy in Hinduism; neo-

Pythagoreanism, and neo-Platonism are preachers of Manichean philosophy of life. The 45th Yasna says, "Whoso, therefore, in the future lightly esteemeth the Daevas and those mortals who lightly esteem him—even all others save that one who highly esteemeth him—unto him shall the holy self of the future Saoshyant, (Deliverer), as Lord of the house, be friend, or brother or father, O Mazda Ahura." Mani became a part of Zoroastrian polity even after its total banishment with force even upto the days of Naoshirwan. Extract good from the world—to put Mani in a nushell—that smacks of eclectic communism of the 20th century; says Zarathushtra, "banish evil from the world". This polarity of ethics must create a feud in less scientific thinking of the times, but Hormasdis during one year of his reign fully encouraged the growth of Manicheism—he joined the ends of the poles in the circle of his authority. Apollonius was similarly treated in Greece, and the accepted agnosticism underlying his thought came to be realised as golden gnosticism, for he said, "redemption was to be sought from falsehood and ignorance", and no Prophet earth has given birth to, has deepened falsehood and clouded light. Though Manicheism was progressive thought, the Zoroastrian monarchs, the aristocracy and the feudal basis of the monarchic system could ill afford to cherish this sort of Stoicism except at the peril of the whole empire in the act of slow but steady development. Again, the Sassanians had a virtuous obligation to discharge to the growing conquests of the west—Parthia, Babylonia, Chaldea, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Iran, and even parts of the great Roman Empire, and therefore, a monastic Manicheism ill compared with acquisition of material power—the just ambition of a fresh conqueror. "Our progress is but the surface turbulence of a sea which in its depths is changeless and still. Utopias are the ethereal poems with which our sensitive souls anaesthetize themselves against the caustic operations which life and death perform upon us. But a strong power will take its wounds without anodyne; or if it needs forgetfulness, it will immerse itself in the present and its routine details, taking no thought of humanity's to-morrows. What is has been and will be. Only

fashions change." Manicheism was an utopia, it lent but a surface turbulence to the progress of Zarathustra's faith that was slowly being ushered in under the sons of Sassan.

BEHRAM'S RIGIDITY

Behram the imperialist successor—4th in the dynasty realised that a profession like that of his predecessor Hormasdis in serious Manicheism would reverse the ascending destiny of his glorious forebears. Ardashir must keep back Alexander Severus, Shahpoor must bring Valerian to his knee, and still many realms were to be made parts of the Persian Empire—, and that could be done only with steadying the mind of Iran on the pure doctrine of Zarathushtra, and so by banishing Mani and all his obnoxious paraphernalia. "It is Christianised "Zoroastrianism", exclaimed Behram. "Zoroastrianism is equivalent to Good. Ahura is entirely Good; Ahriman has his province under the shade of Evil". Mani was found by the Magis in the fulness of their counsel and wisdom to be essentially an admixture of Light and Darkness. This gives rise to a material universe. Light and Dakrness cannot co-exist. Light must free itself from Darkness. And Mani must therefore, pay by his very life, the sins he taught to mankind striking at the roots of a sacred Zoroastrianism. And Mani was put to a most excruciating death by imperial orders. Mani preached the necessity of fasting, and of birth-control as food and marriage were to him the propagators of vice in man. Zarathushtra out of whose doctrine were born empire-builders like Gushtasp, and Lohrasp, like Cyrus and Darius the First, like Ardashir and Shahpoor could not accept Mani even on the material plane. Browne justly remarks in his famous History of Persia, 'The whole universe would collapse and the final conflagration would mark the Redemption of the Light and its final dissociation from the irremediable and indestructible Darkness", if Mani came into power.

Mazda is the prime inaugurator and father of the ethical order of creation, the creator of Vohu Mano, the fashioner of

the lovely Armaiti and Khshathra (Gathas). In another song of the Gathas, with Armaiti=true belief, is united Asha= righteousness. Plutarch calls Armaiti creator of wisdom. She is according to tradition, the guardian spirit or deity of the earth, the "solicitous, good Mother Earth". How could Manicheism an "admixture of Light with Darkness" match the serene purity of original science of Zarathushtra as he taught in the Gathas?

A Mani dead should not expect to shoot up the lightful stress of Zoroastrianism in the swirling curls of popular thought. Behram died the same year as his Roman opponent Aurelian who had planned an invasion upon Persia through Byzantium, which if successful, as likely it might have been due to the crippled military resources of Persia, would have imperilled the revival of Zoroastrianism at the hand of another foe like Manicheism, in the form of neo-Roman cult. Behram II found in the Romans and Armenians a combined enemy who must be baffled ere the standard of Zarathushtra could be hurled flying in the face of an opposing world, the Sassanians having universally decried the national religion of Armenia, based as it was upon image-worship such as of the Sun and the Moon. So long ago as 200 B.C. Valarsaces the Armenian chieftain had erected this sort of devotion to the earthly gods and goddesses; and when Tiridates was supported by the Romans in his claim for Armenian throne, he succeded in his effort, until at last Narses the successor of Behram III, and a descendant of Shahpoor I, lost a goodly part of acquisitions of the previous heroic Sassanian princes at the hand of the Roman Galerius.

WARS AGAIN

Again, Persia fell, and the Roman prince Diocletian had the supreme hand in the complex conflict between Persia and Rome. The stars of Iran's destiny were swayed by the changing gloom of Chance, and Bismarck has written wisely to Voltaire,—"The older one becomes, the more one is

persuaded that His Sacred Majesty Chance does 3/4 of the work of this miserable universe". Chance raises the stars of Iran once again and after Shahpoor I comes the second Shahpoor 309-380—and again wars if not of religion, yet those inspired by a spiritual cause are waged against the Romans, the Mesopotamians and now against the rising race of Arabs. During his long reign he battled against Christianity so vigorously propagated under the powerful patronage of Constantine and Julian, and against Islam among whose devotees he had earned the honorific title of Zul-Aktaf, the Lord of the Shoulders, for he tied the Arabs by the neck by boring holes through their shoulders through which a long rope could pass. Primus est vive meaning life comes first, says a Latin proverb, and every nation as every individual, maintains itself in healthy life before anything else.

SHAHPOOR II

How did the nation re-build under Shahpoor II?—It Zoroastrianism were to be regenerated in its original purity it must get state aid, just as Constantine had adopted Christianity as State religion, and he was boldly carrying out the political behests so far as the Church was concerned. Uniting the Church with the State, Shahpoor followed out his illustrious predecessor Ardashir's admonition to his son. The Royal Court, according to the Shah-Nameh, was to consist of Mubadan Mubad the High Priest, Buzurg Farmatar, Chief Minister, Iran Sipahpat, Commander-in-Chief, Iran Dapirat, Secretary of State, Vastryosanpat, Minister of Agriculture. Law was reckoned to be an integral part of religion. The presiding Judge Sraoshvarez was a religious upholder of justice. When oaths were taken in the court, both Royal and Judicial, they were taken in the names of Hormazd, Vohuman, Ardebehesht, Zarathushtra, Sarosh, Rashna, etc. Even Ardashir I was always guided by the advice given by his trusted High Priest Dastoor Tansar. Adarbad Maharespand attained to the Prime Ministership of the State in the days of Shahpoor II. His holiness was miraculously proved by the burning molten

metal poured on his breast to prove that the Zoroastrian creed he adhered to and he preached was Ahura-inspired.

Froba, Goshasp, Burzin Meher (according to Minoi Khirad) were burnt as the three patron Fires for the Priestly community —none could pretend the virtues he taught, everyone had to prove them by his deed—so great was the discipline of the soul and of the mind. Ahura through Fire was the unalterable creed not the Mithraic fire that was the god itself. Firdausi warned humanity, therefore, that "they (Persians), were not worshippers of fire, but they were worshippers of the one true Yazdan. The court of the Sassanians was not priest-dominated as the Hindu court with the Brahmanas installed as the pantheon of class-worship; but it was guided by religious concepts on every State matter, so that the highest and best decision could be arrived at. Read Ardaviraf, Adarbad Marespand, Buzarj—Meher, and you find honeyed gold dropping out of their lips—wisdom, and truth. The Munis, the Geeta sings of, were the guides and directors of the States. So were the wise men of the courts of Sassan princes.

'In the end only personality counts", says Goethe, and the classes were also equally influenced by the spirituality of the wise men of the court of Shahpoor, so that there were three classes—Buzargan = elders, Azatan = grandees, Vashpuhrgan = feudal lords. Freedom was ensured to all these and even Woman was free—Shireen, the wife of Khusrao Parviz played polo; and then, marriage was a compulsion in the social laws of the Sassanians. With a broad-based and such a highly laid out society what could not be done by the people for their monarchs? Shahpoor was accordingly, applauded as "the companion of the stars", "brother of the sun and the moon". Khusrao Parviz was extolled as "the immortal man among the gods". "Yatha raja, tatha praja", is an old adage among the political shastris of the Aryans, and the Sassanians after their conquests upon their opponents made the whole country one unity based upon the science of God.

With Shahpoor the chief Yazatas were Mithra, Anahita, and Sraosha. Asha and Druj ruled the two continents of man's soul. "Whatever open or secret things" says the Yasna 31, "may be visited with judgment or what man for a little sin demands the heaviest penalty——of all this through the right thou art observing them with flashing eye." That being the doctrine in depth of value, Shahpoor became the veritable enemy of Christianity. Constantine, the founder of the immortal Constantinople of many a political quarrel between nations of this earth, was the leading light of Christianity then contemporaneous with Shahpoor; and unless Shahpoor defeated him Zarathushtra would not be the suzerain in the empire he was strenuously reviving. But the great Roman died a natural death. Tiridates the Armenian convert to Christianity too had died in 314 A.D. Shahpoor invaded the territories of the successors of both the above and after varying successes of eight years of long wars he returned to his native land, when he laid down rigid laws for Christians—in fact, it was a policy of persecution that he laid out in order to give a quick-paced impetus to all that had so far been revived by his predecessors in the direction of Zoroastrianism, as well as to develop it now that some of the most obnoxious impediments in the way had been slowly and steadily melting away, Christianity was fast becoming the central congregation of all anti-forces, politically speaking, in the east, and if a builder of new civilisation, like Shahpoor, indicated any slackness his very empire would be in a prejudicial position. Therefore, he must fight his political battles on one hand, but as well he must terrorise his enemies on the other, even by going the length of persecution of Christianity. The Romans were passing through a crisis of decay. Oswald Spengler has at one place foreseen the vision of the Decline and Fall of the West, and he says, "You are dead. I see in you all the typical stigmata of decay. Your institutions, your democracy, your corruption, your gigantic cities, your science, your art, your socialism, your atheism, your philosophy, even your mathematics, are precisely those that characterized the dying stages of ancient

states. Another century and civilisation will have found her seat far from you. This is your Alexandrian age."

How adaptibly true about Rome of Shahpoor's days! What Akib in his celebrated Acts quotes, Shahpoor exclaimel:— "The Christians destroy our holy teaching, and teach men to serve one God, and not to honour the sun or fire. They teach them too, to defile water by their ablutions; to refrain from marriage and the procreation of children; and to refuse to go out to war with the King of Kings. They have no scruples about the slaughter and eating of animals; they bury the corpses of men in the earth; and attribute the origin of snakes and creeping things to a good God. They despise many servants of the King and teach witchcraft." The philosophy of Zoroastrianism differed from the above in as much as the latter considered Ahura and the universe as separate, the whole administration of the living substance vesting in the Amesha Spentas, opposed to Ahriman's group; Sraosha=obedience mastering Asha=Destiny, ruling as powerful Yazatas. The personality of man lay not in Feeling, Reason, and Will as Christianity dictated, but it abided in Ahu=vitality, Daena=ego, Baodha=perception. As for the spirit and its doctrine Shahpoor supported the system of Urwan=soul, so that there was also the Geush Urwan= the ox-soul. Haurvatat meaning salvation and Ameretat meaning immortality were two other entities the Sassanians condescended to adhere to as scientific powers enabling the Zoroastrian mind to pursue the higher paths of virtue. While Christianity taught dependence upon the Son, the Father, and the Holy Ghost as the trio of salvation, Zoroastrianism in its days of revival, emphasised the necessity of "One can make or mar his own life,"—a dependence upon one's self for either a way upward or the reverse. It corresponds closely to the doctrine of Karma Yoga so highly expounded in the Hindu Books of religion principally, the Geeta.

A direct combat between the two parallel creeds could not but result in violent acts of suppression as a policy of the States themselves. Shahpoor inscribes the virtue of his country as follows:—

"This is the edict of me, the Mazda-worshipper—Shahpoor, the divine, King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, of celestial descent from God, son of the Mazda worshipper, Artakhshir, the divine, King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, of celestial descent from God, grandson of Papak, the divine, the King."

That was when the First Shahpoor raised the standard of sevolt. None-the-less, the spirit of the second Shahpoor was the same.

Payment of a differential rate of payment of tax from the ordinary Iranian was required of the Christians. It was though not a just imposition yet a necessary one—not a persecution—for the Christians received all the benefits accuring from the Iranian rule, but refused to turn out for war when one arose against the Romans, and, if they did they could not be relied upon for they lacked in their trust and faith in the State that gave them protection. Even here, Shahpoor was merciful, and appointed the Catholic Head priest of the times, Mar—Lord Shimun to easily collect the impost that was quite legitimate, so as to avoid all and any sense of persecution with which his name has been thoughtlessly tainted. But the Mar refused to obey and he along with others was imprisoned which any lawfully-running state could do. European historians well-famed for their partiality to both their country and their faith have portrayed Shahpoor as the Gatherer of Poll-Tax from the Christians. But justice mingled with love and care for his subjects was the main policy of Shahpoor and he should be the last to fall a worthy prey to the malignant onslaughts of foreign writers.

EASTERN FRONT

Having subdued the west Shahpoor's mind was directed towards the east where he met with political friends but religious enemies. The great Roman hero Julian, was baf-

fled in all his territorial ambitions by the Huns aiding Shahpoor; but the latter had equally to carry fire and sword into the heart of the Hun countries, till at last the five provinces beyond the Tigris and Nisibis fell to Shahpoor and a successful peace was signed with Rome (A.D.376) three years before Shahpoor died. Ammianus Marcellinus, the Roman historian commenting on the great Persian monarch has the following remarkable reference:—

> "The fortune of the East sounded the terrible trumpet of danger. For the King of Persia, being strengthened by the aid of the fierce nations whom he had lately subdued, and being above all men ambitious of extending his territories, began to prepare men and arms and supplies, mingling hellish wisdom with his human counsels, and consulting all kinds of soothsayers about futurity."

Far from it—Zoroastrianism never permitted such superstitions; it disallowed "hellish wisdom"; and Shahpoor was the foremost Zoroastrian of the time. On the other hand such beliefs were admitted the other way round; anybody who has read the masterful Roman plays of Shakespeare, e.g. Julius Ceasar, will verify for himself whether the above historian is not propagating an untruth about one of the greatest successors of the founder of the Sassanian dynasty.

Great was the power Shahpoor delegated as legacy to his successors—Ardashir II, Shahpoor III (A. D. 379-388); but "Power like a desolating pestilence poisons whatever it touches. We scratch to itch and we itch to scratch!" So said the wise Socrates, and, verily, it was true of the successors of the great conqueror. If Persia did not make further progress, Rome, too, had been rendered equally weak as a result of new foes in the person of Arabs and the Goths, the latter of whom dealt the Romans a great blow at Adrianople in 384 A. D. The White Huns also crossed the river Oxus, and with the Sakaes Chinese and others the Romans were weakened

greatly, so that with pre-vision had the successors of Shahpoor intended a total development of Zoroastrianism on the field left open by Christianity they would have well-nigh succeeded.

YEZDEZARD I & CHRISTIANITY

After Behram IV (388-399.) came Yezdezard I, who fell a prey to the fall in the curve of impermanent evolution, so that instead of promoting the advancing cause of Zoroastrianism, he softened the attitude of the State towards Christianity. Though not a Christian either by birth or by inheritance, he imbibed a natural mercy towards Christ, and allowed that freedom to his followers for which the Sassanians in general were noted. There were other personal reasons such as, Marutha the Mesopotamian Catholic having cured him of a virulent malady. Yezdezard first issued a Royal Firman throwing open the bars hitherto closed against Christianity, the first being open worship, another, building new churches and renovating the ruined ones.

Yezdezard in his zeal for promotion of the religious in man forgot that religion ought to mean only the Path of Zarathushtra, and not what was alien to the spirit of Zoroastrianism. "All things are endued with an appetite to two kinds of good—the one as this thing is a whole in itself; the other as it is part of some greater whole. And this latter is more worthy and more powerful than the other, as it tends to the conservation of a more ample form." Through Zoroastrianism alone, not through any other agency could salvation be found —was too hard a dictate Yezdezard could follow out. But the realisation was soon to dawn, for the Christians immediately assumed the right of recognition through their church by the State. All matters pertaining to the Christians were directly negotiated by Yezdezard with the supreme church. That the Christians were roused to self-consciousness could be evidenced from the fact that the new freedom set them thinking about putting their house in order as since the days of the Council of Nichaea, (325 A. D.) there had arisen among

the Christians ecclesiastical differences giving rise to splits in their ranks. They convened what is known in Christian history as the Council of Seleucia 410 A. D. only a year after Yezdezard's recognising the Church as the official representative of the Christians. When the Gorgon raised its head in peril against his ancestral creed, Yezdezard's eyes were opened to the reality of the situation, and he went over to the other extreme—harrassment first and perseution then. He despoiled his connections with the Christians now as he had done those with the Persians by countering the progress of Zoroastrianism already set afoot by his predecessors. Death saved him however, from further ignominy. Firdausi has some very chastising remarks about the concluding period of his rule. "Perhaps truth is only the common denominator of our delusions, and certainty is an error in which all men agree.", says a celebrated American philosopher; Yezdezard wavered between the uncertainties of beliefs so that once it is stated he thought of being baptised; but at last the belief born of his blood supervened and he paid back when it was too late to forgive him. How repentant must be thus, the hearts of converts from one faith into another!

BEHRAM GOOR AND THE ROMANS

His successor Behram Goor had to start a war with the Romans which had temporarily closed in the previous reign, only because the legacy left by Yezdezard compelled Behram to be more vigilant if not actually tyrranous towards Christians. When some of the Christians crossed over to the territories of Rome as religious refugees the Romans found a justifiable reason to declare war upon Persia, also with the ulterior object of re-gaining their lost possessions when the great Shahpoor ruled and fought. In the fight that ensued the Christians began to gain an ascendancy, so that a balanced equity was brought about between the rival creeds by a peace that allowed freedom to both on the side of their opposite.

Immediately thereafter, the Eastern and the Western Church, that had fallen foul of each other so far resolved to close up their ranks, and accordingly in A. D. 424 a Council of Dad-Ishu was held to dissolve the ecclesistical differences. The object of such conferences was always at bottom to disenchain the Christians from the loyalty and obedience they owed to the Persians, in which the Romans very well utilised the Christians for their political ends.

It was a war of ideas that was raging between Persia and Rome; and in the fulness of God's wisdom, human society has been so organised that sensation at one or the other stage of our life, refuses to be the test of truth. All that we know is ideas of our own. We cannot test these by an external world, for the world too, is made by our own sensations. "How can we", asks a philosopher, "ever discover the "object" would look like had it not been forced to disguise itself into those visual, auditory, tactuary, olfactory, and gustatory sensations through which alone we know it?" Everything we suppose is the judge of thought, and are constructs of thought itself. It is the idea which we form after combining into an arbitrary and confused mosaic, the multiple sensations that have come to us so diversely through our nerves. We put together all our senses and name the resulting construct this or that. The Zoroastrianism or the Christianity the two warring parties created, was the theological substance of their mutual perceptions. Verily, the only world that exists is the world of Mind, of Ideas: everything else is a supposition.

CONFLICT OF SUPPOSITIONS

Half the Sassanian period vacated itself in this conflict of suppositions; idea has a changefulness of nature, and so, at times some Iranian princes inclined towards Christianity, and some Roman Christians accepted the Zoroastrian shapes and forms, which they conceived as in the nature of Christianity. Peace, therefore, was made between the

Persians and the Romans and Mesopotamians to give a breathing time to both the rival creeds to assess the values of the two rejuvinated theories of life and belief.

What could Asia not provide by way of diversities of faiths resolved into a unity? This has been an age-long persuasion in history. With Persia unified into one imperial stock under the cementing power of the holy ideology of Zarathushtra, such opposing unities began to show their heads against the Sassanians, whom one after the other they had the clear duty to subdue. Christians, Romans, subdued or removed from the field of direct opposition, the White Huns as they were called,—the Haytals, according to the Sassanians,—crossed the Oxus in 425 A. D. and Behram Goor armed himself to fight the new peril. They were a combination of Mongols, Romans, Chinese, with a loose form of Christ as their basic guide, and general Confucianism as the theory of life and belief. Behram drove them away from across the borders of Oxus, so that at the time of his death, (A. D. 440) he left the Sassanian empire free from the danger of the White Huns. He was immortal: Omar-e-Khayyam properly sings him down to eternity as follows:—

"And Behram, the great Hunter— the Wild Ass., (Goor) Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep." With the accession of Yezdezard II Zoroastrianism definitely turned a corner towards assumption of complete power over the bewildering soul of the Sassanian kingdom; it was the stage of development of Zoroastrianism in the heart of Asia. Ideas had grown and rendered more solid and ripe in the direction of Time, Fate governed by the Planets; Zarvane Akarne the eternal Time Yuga of the Aryan concept was concentrating on the strength of man in the common form of Fatalism—however passing the phase was. The Mobeds were not free of this compelling doctrine. So late as the days of Nosherwan, Buzarjameher used to preach that Fate and man's efforts were closely linked together and their relations were inalienable. This ought to rouse the ire of religious opponents like the Armenians whose leader Eznik, picked up the so-called doc-

trine of the Persians—Fatalism—as the degrading force in the concept of Zoroastrianism. The Mobeds did not found Zoroastrianism on the soil of Fatalism, and so an out-cry was raised that war must be declared upon the Armenians and their territory must be won back.

DEVOTION TO PEACE

Praise is due to the Sassanian princes for their devotion to the cause of peace they always emphasised upon. So, Yezdezard sent Meher Narsi on a mission of peaceful win-over of the Armenians towards Persia. "Zerwan" said, Narsi, "is the prime originator of Ahura and Ahriman." Even Tansar said to Jasnaf, king of Tabaristan, almost the same thing and gave to Time and Fate the power of God = Ahura. Tansar to Jasnaf:—" A wise man balances between Fate and Free Will, "and the King of Tabaristan rewarded him for the truth he uttered. But persuasion failed and battles had to be fought as a result of which the Christians once again suffered losses.

The White Huns on one side and the Zoroastrians on the other was a situation Phiruz the successor of Yezdezard had to face on his accession to the throne, A. D. 459. It was not pure heresy the Persians had to contend against, but rather it was a cumbrous mixture of Christianity with the Mithraic forms of Zoroastrianism and even Manicheism. Monasteries flourished and the vows of poverty were esteemed high. Even the Dinkard says, "Wealth is given to assuage the wrongs of suffering humanity." The Assyrian church was dominated by the churchmen who devoted themselves to the degradations of life, such as non-acquisition of material gains lawfully earned, which is never encouraged by Zoroastrianism. Andarz-e-Atarpat-e-Maraspand records, "Wealth changes its masters like a bird that flies from one tree to another, only to leave that in turn for still another." This will explain how Zoroastrian saints and writers and even priests were influenced by the doctrines which saturated the philosophy of Zoroastrian life.

Phiruz attacked the Huns from Saad-e-Sikandar but he did not succeed in his plans as well as he did not in his attempt at propagating Zoroastrianism among the Armenians, and he died on the battle-plain a martyr to the cause of the faith he endeared so much, A. D. 483. Volagases his brother could not hold his own against the Armenians, for the religious policies themselves were weakening and the orthodox type of belief had been considerably shaken on the anvil of combination and agreement between Christianity and Zoroastrianism.

Just the same clash of controversies arose between the sections of Christians as it always happens in the case of every growing movement—political, religious, social. What is the nature of God?— was the question that demanded solution from the Church, and while hitherto Zoroastrians had scrupulously avoided interference with such foreign controversies, the Persia of Phiruz ventured into the sacred precincts and offered to Christians a solution which was all Zoroastrian. It was at the last and Fourth Council of the Church held at Chalcedon, A. D. 451 that Rome was fixed to be the Primate and God was annointed with two natures. Though the doctrines at different places such as Persia and Armenia differed yet all were tinged with increasing influences of Zoroastrianism. The belief propounded in the sacred scriptures of the Persians laid down Ahura Mazda as the creator of Ameshaspandas, His colleagues, such as the Bundahishna. Zarathushtra received the highest Knowledge by the force of which neither fire, nor molten metal, nor knife could harm him. Ormazd was the father of Vohu Mano, who is also the protector of cattle. Pahalavi Izads, Avestan Yazatas, were the guardian angels; Farohar Pahalavi, Avestan Fravashi,— These formed the hiearchy of Zoroastrian theology. They did not offer an invincible opposition to Christianity, but they presented a pantheon from whose concept the prevailing Christianity was not free. Farvardigan observances were cherished with a religious zest, so that once in 565 when these celebrations were held in Nisibus in the possession of the Persians, the

Byzantine ambassador was not allowed to enter the town. Where there are two loosenesses in the two creeds they become easy bed-fellows.

PROSYLETISATION

Prosyletisation comes on our records as early as the days of Shahpoor II who with the help of Adarbad went in for proselytism, and Dadastane-Hazar-Madigan provides valuable proof thereof:—" If a Christian slave embraces the faith of his Zoroastrian master he should be set free." Meher Narsi on his peace mission to the Armenians asked Christians to embrace Zoroastrianism: "If you do not you would be the followers of Ahriman". Albania, Armenia, Georgia, were full of Judaism and its followers as well as Christianity— two of the greatest anti-concepts of Zoroastrianism, and yet Zoroastrianism out of the abundance of charity it had, converted so many of the foes into friends both of the state and of the religion. Tolerance was the key-note of Sassanian Zoroastrianism.

This admixture had started so early as the days of the Achemenians. Cyrus and Darius are remembered in the historical accounts of the Jews down till the present day as the saviours of their faith, for they allowed them freedom of worship and even restored Jerusalem to them. How cannot the traditions of their fore-fathers be followed by the Sassanians? — so that Yezdezard I married a Jewish princess. Hormazd IV, Naoshirwan and Khusrao Parviz openly supported and protected the Christians. Nush-Zad the son of Naoshirwan was actually brought up as a Christian. The diverse sects of Christianity flourished as time lapsed and Zoroastrians and Christians became more and more allied together instead of being alienated. The Dinkard denounced such combinations; but that is a great ethnological, and racial discussion, which offers problems of deep thought, and deeper study.

At times the Zoroastrian monarchs entered the religious disputes of the Christians and helped in enlarging the gulfs of

different thinkings amongst the Christians though not intentionally, but in line with the fostered political enmity with the Romans, e.g., Phiruz helped Bar-Soma the Archbishop of Nisibus in establishing the doctrine of "two natures in God", corresponding with the Zoroastrian faith in Ormazd being the Creator of both Good and Evil. Phiruz desired a separation from the Monophysitic Church by the Christians, and so aided Bar-Soma's fight against antagonistic theorists. Later, Christian priests were allowed to marry unlike before, due purely to the influences of Zoroastrian association, by the Christians. The eastern half of Rome was monophysitic, from Christian point of view. Under Justin the Roman monarch, there was a return to dyophysitic belief. The Persians assisted in the solutions of the problems facing the Christians. Mar Aba the great was a Christian convert to Zoroastrianism and he served as Patriarch. Missions to India and China were led by Christian Zoroastrians.

ORIGIN OF ST. IVES

History also says that during the 6th century, a Persian Bishop named Ivon visited England, from whom the term St. Ives has come. He preached a mixed doctrine of Zoroastrian Christianity. Just as mendicancy was discouraged according to Zoroastrianism, idleness was legally punished, under the Christian code. The Khudai Namak remarks that the philosophy of justice was adopted as the main political vocabulary for the guidance of the rulers of the State. The Shah Nameh bears evidence to the fact that Buzarja Meher believed in Christianity. He was put to death only for holding such belief by Naoshirwan's son, Khursrao Parviz to save the rot that some time had set in due to the influences of the powerful antagonist in the State. Yet Khusrao Parviz marries a Christian wife whom he prosyletised into Zoroastrianism. Even Yezdezard who fell at the hand of the Arabs and wandered his last days of life and was cruelly murdered by a treacherous foe was given an honourable burial by Christians at Merv.

AFFILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO

The affiliation of Christianity to Zoroastrianism was due to the unalterable law of associative influences from which no religion has escaped during the cycles of human race. The kernel has remained; the forms have had an eternal change—" What? Shall the dateless world in dust be blown?

> Back to the un-remembered and un-known,
> And this frail Thou— this flame of yesterday—
> Burn on forlorn, immortal and alone?"

That was what Mallock sang only half a century ago, and that has been true of generations since man began to write the history of man.

Kobad the successor of Phiruz had bitterly Christian experience at the hand of a communist saint— a complex of Christ and Plato— not a communism of the Leninist type revolutionising the Russias of the world, but a sound philosophy of life that, if followed, would certainly, overthrow even Kobad's empire; but doctrinally so adaptible to the Christian necessities of the time, that if Zoroastrianism did not compel itself to it, it might either have to fight through to live and survive or perish. That was Mazdak.

All men are equal in birth and in life. All private property should be enjoyed by the State to be in possession of all—even women could not escape common possession of all. Mazdak added to this his basic principles, the ideas of abstemiousness and devotion to God; and he held animal life as sacred investment of God to man. Mazdak captured the youthful fancy of Kobad, so that he became his disciple. Mazdak resorted to the practising of magic which he termed to the ignorant as miracles. A sudden flash of fanaticism captured the soul of Persia and Mazdak got an ascendancy which roused fear in the minds of the Zoroastrians who suspected that again the wrath of Mani had overcome the sense of Persians, and there would be another convulsion

in the State unless immediately handled and Mazdak totally suppressed. So, Kobad was compelled to give up his official support to communism newly being preached. The White Huns having proved a dangerous impediment to the growth of Zoroastrianism, Kobad lost himself in his handling of the communist peril.

ENTER—THE ARABS

Meanwhile, the Arabs entered the scene of history, and the Christian revival was dangerously jeopardised. That was so much to the gain of Persia, however costly it ultimately proved to be. The Saracenes sacrificed 400 nuns to the goddess Venus out of rage against idolatry and it sent a thrill of horror in the universal heart of Christianity. It is note-worthy in the history of the times that while Zoroastrianism co-operated at times with Christianity, the Persians under Sassanian guidance not only opposed but also, fought against the rising forces of Islam under the leadership of the Arabs. The Chinese also appear on the theological stage, and there is Po-sz= Persia, and there are references to Mo-hu-tan= Mobeds, and to the Towers of Silence where exposure of the dead is not favoured by the Chinese writers. Kobad=Kavad= Kawat Ku-hwo-tu is held in deep respect.

Zoroastrianism at this time of its radical development though now no longer attacked, was entering into a phase of commixed progress. This has happened to all national developments. But that was the purification of the religion, and a firmness towards what was recorded to be the modern character of the faith. Naoshirwan extirpated the creed of Mazdak, and he realised that any further freedom given to the new morality of mankind would irretrievably lead to the down-fall of the empire itself, by withdrawing from the soul of Persia much that was simple Zoroastrianism on whose pillars was raised the new fabric of Sassanian commonwealth.

With the rapid fall of Rome, Naoshirwan had to face the crisis of an equally rapid advance of Turkey and Islam. Mohammed born in 570 A. D. established a violent doctrine to change the face of the world. Islam was born in the deserts of Arabia with Arab Sabeanism and Judaism as its lawful parents. Edwin Arnold says that Islam's foster-nurse was Eastern Christianity. Zoroastrianism was its single dread in those early days of its birth. There was mutual hatred inbred in both against each other. Yezdezard II would call the Moslems "eaters of lizards", out of contempt for their way of living. Naoshirwan led virulent campaigns of death and destruction against the Moslems (A.D. 576) and carried fire and sword into regions as far as Abyssinia. But the new spirit could hardly be subdued. Persia a riverless desert 10" in the north, and 5" in the south offered to the Turks a florid ground for conquest, and as time advanced Islam became as great a peril to the Zoroastrian Sassanian dynasty as to Roman Christianity. Just as Sassanian princes have been noted to have allowed themselves the indulgence of mingling themselves with Christianity, there have been also instances in which some prince or two accorded credence to Islam as well, for instance, Hormazan a successor of Naoshirwan is recorded to have embraced Islam. It was life itself that Islam demanded in the event of battle, and the decadent period of Sassanian dynasty furnished instances in which weakness declared itself to be the friend of the Prince rather than valour of the state as of yore. It was thus that at the battle of Ram Hormaz, Khaleef Omar the greatest protagonist of Islam offered to save the Sassanian Prince's life if only he espoused the doctrine of Mohammed. When the Prince trembled lest he might be poisoned when given water, the Khaleef said, "Fear nothing; your life is safe until you have drunk the water." Kadeseya and then Nehavand sealed the doom of Iran, and though Islam supervened the imperial forces of the land yet, with the fall of Yezdezard, the prosperity of Zoroastrianism did not dim its lustre.

SUBTLE DIFFERENCES

Just as among Christianity there were debates as to the origin of godhood and about the birth of Christ, there arose similar subtle differences even among the Zoroastrians of the later Sassanian existence on the soil of Iran. For example the Zarvanitism, from Zarvan=time which later migrated to the west rose higher than the Mithraic cult. It preached Zarvan to be the prime originator of Ormazd and Ahriman. Also another example; a sort of mysticism was developed around the Zoroastrian creed, which is the pinnacle of a faith's esoteric settlement in the soul of a race. Ardaviraf says, "When Viraf is taken to Ormazd's court he hears his voice but sees him not—eternal, invisible, intangible, omniscient, omnipotent, creator of good, and merciful." Then there arose classes of propagators of the doctrine of Avestan Spena Mainyu, and Pahalavi Spena Menu as opposed to Gana Menu. Some gave Evil an independent birth and death, and asserted that Ahriman was not created by God. Others did not favour such a belief. This indicates the full ripeness of development of the religion of Zarathushtra in the times of the Sassanians. Religions are born among the poor and die among the rich. The Persians after Nehavand preserved the faith, in whatever disputatious form you may choose to put it down as.

After the great period of Shahpoor and Naoshirwan, we the remnants brought the flame here in India and first sowed the seeds and then developed the tree. We had our lookers at the back, lookers to the fore, but all the same we maintained the Sassanian revival. Eckermann says, "The development of humanity seems to be a matter of thousands of years." Goethe goes one better and unfolds, "Who knows? Perhaps, millions." There have been hindrances in our way—these and all kinds of distress have made Zoroastrianism develop its powers. Have we not seen that in the above historical narration? We are now effecting a rejuvenated creation—with this Zoroastrianism.

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